(No date) 1890

Tasmanians

[KS: Appendix A--Norman's Vocabulary has been omitted because of technical difficulties in reproducing the phonetics]

116, 192

"The vocabularies of the Tasmanian language which have come down to us are twelve in number. In vol. ix. of the Royal Geographical Society, Dr. Lhotsky published a vocabulary by a man named McGeary (1), who lived many years in contact with the aborigines, and attributed to Péron (2), which fell into the hands of a lady at Sydney. The Tasmanian Journal in 1842 (vol. i) published a long vocabulary by Jorgen Jorgensen (3), compiled from documents in the Colonial Secretary's Office at Hobart. This list included three other separate vocabularies, one (4) from a locality not indicated, a second made by the Rev. Mr. Dove (5) at Flinders Islands, and the third, La Billardière's (6) vocabulary taken during d'Entrecasteaux's expedition in 1792, and which the naturalist published in his account of that voyage. Braim's is a copy of Jorgen Jorgensen's. Cook (7) has given us ten words, and Gaimard (Dumont d'Urville, Philologie, pp. 9-10) gathered some words (8) at Port Dalrymple from the lips of a native Tasmanian woman. Mr. E. M. Curr, in his 'Australian Race,' has published two vocabularies which hitherto had not seen the light, namely by Mr. Roberts (9), and another by the Rev. Mr. Norman (10). Mr. Milligan issued a small vocabulary (11) by Mr. Thomas Scott, an old Tasmanian squatter, made in 1826, and one drawn up by

Mr. Milligan (12) himself, which is by far and away the completest vocabulary of the Tasmanian language. (1)"

"1. It must be remembered that, as was once pointed out by E. B. Tylor (Early Hist. of Mankind, 3rd ed. p. 78), many words in this vocabulary appearing as one are in reality, several joined together; thus:

noonalmeena father (lit. noonal-mee-na)
father my

neingmena mother (lit. neing-me-na)
mother my"

"According to Jorgensen the vocabularies 'might be considerably increased by that of a young man named Sterling, who made the native language his study; his vocabulary was taken away at the death of its author by a person ignorant of its value.' [176]

In the appendix will be found: (a) Norman's vocabulary [KS: Norman's vocabulary has been omitted because of technical difficulties in reproducing the phonetics]; (b) a vocabulary which we have compiled of those of Braim (Jorgen Jorgensen's), and Cook, Gaimard, La Billardière, McGeary, Péron, Roberts, and Scott; and (c) Milligan's vocabulary. The description given by Milligan as to the manner in which he obtained his vocabulary, and the great care he took to insure correctness, is best given in his own words.

'In order that ethnologists and others interested in the vocabulary of aboriginal dialects [of Tasmania] may be inclined to put perfect confidence in their accuracy, I have to explain that every word before being written down was singly committed to a committee (as it were) of several aborigines, and made thoroughly intelligible to them, when the corresponding word in their language, having been agreed upon by them, was entered. . . . On being completed the manuscript was laid aside for two or three years, when it was again submitted, verbatim et seriatim, to a circle of aborigines, for their remarks. A revision which led to the discovery and correction of numerous blunders originating in misapprehension, on the part of the aborigines in the first place, of the true meaning of

words which they had been required to translate. But I found the fault had oftentimes been my own, in having failed to seize the exact and essential vocal expression, which on being repeated to the aborigines at any time afterwards, would infallibly reproduce the precise idea which it had been stated to imply in the first instance."

1: Roth--178
116, 192, 551

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"'The elision and absolute rejection and disuse of words from time to time has been noticed as a source of change in the aboriginal dialects. It happened thus: The names of men and women were taken from natural objects and occurrences around, as, for instance, a kangaroo, a gum tree, snow, hail, thunder, the wind, the sea, the Waratah--or Blandifordia or Boronia, when in bloom, etc.; but it was a settled custom in every tribe, upon the death of any individual, most scrupulously to abstain ever after from mentioning the name of the deceased, --a rule, the infraction of which would, they considered, be followed by some dire calamities.... Such a practice must, it is clear, have contributed materially to reduce the number of their substantive appellations, and to create a necessity for new phonetic symbols to represent old ideas, which new vocables would in all probability differ on each occasion, and in every separate tribe; the only chance of fusion of words between tribes arising out of the capture of females for wives from alien and hostile people....'"

1: Roth--179
116, 192

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Tasmanians

"Jorgensen tells us in the introduction to his vocabulary: 'It is difficult to imagine the rapid and ever-changing corruptions to which an oral language is subject in the mouths of a savage tribe; and in the present case many words, borrowed from the English, have added to the confusion produced by the irregular and careless pronunciation of the aborigines. Thus picanini, a child; buckelow or bacala, bullocks; tablety corrupted from travel, to go, which again was contracted into tablee, are all from the English. Lubra is a word introduced by the English from the Sydney natives (who do not at all understand the languages of our aborigines), and it appears to have been substituted for lurga or lolna, a woman.'"